

An Interview with
ARTHUR REVERT

An Oral History conducted and edited by
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Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
1987



Albert "Dad" Revert
1869-1953
circa 1930



Arthur Revert (r.) shaking hands with Senator Pat McCarran.
Jack Prewett is to the Senator's left.
1950'S

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PREFACE

The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are not history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherency. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will,

in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;
- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes--in many cases as a stranger--and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have known and admired since I was a teenager; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and southern Nevada--too numerous to mention by name--who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. "Bobby" Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; both entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Bradhurst for his advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. This project would never have

become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

Jean Charney served as administrative assistant, editor, indexer, and typist throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Louise Terrell provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Barbara Douglass also transcribed a number of interviews. Transcribing, typing, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Alice Levine, Jodie Hanson, Mike Green, and Cynthia Tremblay. Jared Charney contributed essential word processing skills. Maire Hayes, Michelle Starika, Anita Coryell, Michelle Welsh, Lindsay Schumacher, and Jodie Hanson shouldered the herculean task of proofreading the oral histories. Gretchen Loeffler and Bambi McCracken assisted in numerous secretarial and clerical duties. Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout the project, and Tom King at the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada at Reno served as a consulting oral historian. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the end of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly developed lodes, were but a memory.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that while much of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region--stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County--remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890 most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be for at least another twenty years.

The great mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), and Rhyolite (1904) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, most of it essentially untouched by human hands.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources

varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the Round Mountain Nugget, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper; Beatty's independent paper folded in 1912. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All six communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities after their own papers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson

Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique--some are large, others are small--yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral interviews as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories also have been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impacts of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions, and quality of life of Nye County

communities that may be impacted by a repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided near the site. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCIHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--R.D.M.

Robert McCracken, interviewing Art Revert, at his home in Beatty, Nevada
April 8 and 10, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

M: Art, why don't you start by telling me when and where you were born.

R: I was born in San Francisco the 14th of November in 1905.

M: That was the same year as the earthquake, wasn't it?

R: Indeed. My family moved to Tonopah, where my father had quite a large business, immediately following the earthquake. My mother wasn't well after my birth, and so we kept her down there with her physician until she felt she could move. Then they moved to Tonopah. My father [Albert Revert] had a big lumber yard there, as well as many other places throughout the state. Some at Verdi, the railroad, the whole bit.

M: Where did your folks come from?

R: My mother was a native of San Francisco.

M: What was her maiden name?

R: Bucking, Henrietta Bucking.

M: Where did her parents come from?

R: They came from Germany. They went to Petaluma first. Of course my paternal grandfather came from Germany by another route. I don't know how he got there.

M: What about your father?

R: He was born in Le Havre, France, and I don't know how he got here. He and his father and mother came over together from France. He and his father wound up in San Francisco and Virginia City, but his mother died in New York.

M: Did he come over as a child?

R: Yes, he was only 11 years old when he came out from Virginia City and he had been there for several years.

M: How much time did he spend in San Francisco before going to Virginia City?

R: Not too much. There was a place that takes care of small children in Virginia City, so he was in that for a while, and when he was 11 years old he got a job in Verdi. His father went in the other direction; I don't know where, but my father was turned over to some French people there, a family. He worked in the box factories in Verdi and such as that. He used to have to wheel the sawdust out. He was so short that he couldn't pick up the wheelbarrow. So a Chinaman, of whom he was very fond all his life, would come by and get the wheelbarrow out and dump it for him. That was his start.

M: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

R: I have 2 brothers: Bob, who lives in Las Vegas now and is 14 years younger than I am; and Norman, who is deceased and was 10 years younger than I am.

M: So that shortly after your birth, your father and mother moved to Tonopah.

R: Yes, they did, but my father was already there. He was taking care of his lumber business up there by that time.

M: When did he go to Tonopah, do you know? Did he go there from Verdi?

R: Yes, he was among the first settlers there.

M: He heard of the strike in Tonopah?

R: Well, I presume that the guy who owned the mill at that time probably sent him there to survey the situation, and he stayed.

M: That would be shortly after 1900, because that's when Tonopah was [founded], 1900.

R: Yes, he was there before I was born for awhile. Then in some manner he

acquired the whole Verdi Lumber Company, which was a big organization. They had yards all over the state—Elko, Fallon, Sparks, Reno, and everything except the southern part of the state, which was nothing in those days. So, he had this chain of lumber yards and hardware and wagons and automobiles and everything that went with it.

M: Was it the same name, Verdi Lumber Company, in Tonopah?

R: Yes. He lived in Tonopah after the earthquake. He acquired the lumber yards about the time I was born or a little before.

M: How long did you live in Tonopah?

R: Oh, we lived there a few years, and then my mother had to go back on the coast where her mother was; she still wasn't well, but she lived to be 90-something. My father bought her a house in Oakland because the weather suited her better there.

M: So, you lived in Tonopah first and then you went to Oakland. Do you have any recollections of Tonopah?

R: None whatever.

M: So how old were you when you went back to Oakland, do you think?

R: I remember being in the 1st grade in Verdi and the 1st grade in Oakland, so it was in that period somewhere. We lived in Verdi some of the time for many years, off and on.

M: Your father kept a home in Verdi, too. Do you know where his lumber yard was located in Tonopah?

R: The lower end of town. John Conley was the manager.

M: So that was the site of it, where Conley was in later years. I remember Conley. Did Conley eventually acquire it from your father?

R: Yes.

M: So then after you went back to Oakland, how long did you stay there?

R: Well, I went through high school there.

M: You would have graduated about 1923? Yes, and your father, did he still stay in Tonopah?

R: Oh, he was all over the state. Mainly in Verdi. But you see, the Verdi operation didn't run in the wintertime. The railroad got snowed in, so in the wintertime he was more or less free.

M: But yet the lumber yards were still working around the state?

R: Oh yes. But we didn't have too much to worry about. We had good people as managers.

M: What did you do after graduation?

R: I went to work in Verdi and around the operation. I passed for a lumber grader, and by that time we weren't beginning to saw enough for our needs, so we'd have to go out and buy it. Our chief source of supply was up on the old NCO, the Northern California Oregon railroad. We used to call it "Northern California Outrage." Ran up to Lakeview. There was a mill at Lakeview and one at Alturas, one at Likely, and we'd buy all their lumber that suited us. We had developed a big molding business. We had doors and sash and all the rest of it.

M: So you were doing some fabrication?

R: No, just put it in bundles and shipped to New York.

M: OK. So you weren't just supplying your lumber yards in Nevada? You were shipping other places too.

R: Yes. New York was our principal market. Because of the texture of our soft pine, California white pine, it was much in demand. You could take a little strip like that and drive nails through it, and it wouldn't split up. Of course we have ideal conditions for curing lumber too. The very dry climate around Verdi seemed to get the job done. We have a good grade

of timber, a lot of clearer cuts in our mill. We graded by taking what was clear and making it into moldings and sash and door, and the rest were used in the box factory.

M: What kind of a man was your father? How would you describe him?

R: Well, I, of course, was extremely fond of him. He was a quiet man; he didn't like any publicity; he didn't like any show of any kind, personally. About 3:00 or 4:00 every morning he went out and started working. He had a lot of locomotives and automobiles that he drove around the country. I remember in Tonopah before he even lived there he had 3 or 4 old Thomas Flyers, which of course was "the" car in those days. We have pictures of it somewhere. He was a great family man, terrific worker, short, heavysset, had a great many friends, and a great many of them among the Chinese. He had some Indian friends too, but he was the advisor and interpreter, more or less, of the Chinese.

M: Did he have a lot of them as employees?

R: The town had them. We always had Chinese help in the house. Up until the time we came here we always had a Chinese cook.

M: How long did you continue with your father in the business, grading lumber and so on?

R: Until the Depression.

M: That would be 1929. Did the Depression damage your father's business?

R: Ruined it. Of course he owed some money to the old Washoe Bank, which was absorbed by Wingfield within a few days of the Depression. Wingfield took it over along with every other bank in the state except the Kerman's. Do you know Kerman and Harris?

M: No, I don't.

R: Well, they were 2 very fine men. Their bank was a substantial bank.

It survived, Depression or no Depression. And of course after Wingfield acquired all those banks throughout the state, he looted them. He sold off all the assets, and then he went broke. Or his banks did. I'll always remember my father talking to him; he said, "Well, George, I guess you went broke too. Who owns the Riverside and the Golden and all the rest of these hotels?" George said, "Oh, my boy." Boy? Had them pushed up.

M: So he had shoved them over to his kids?

R: Yes. He was for George Wingfield.

M: So he wasn't that broke in reality. Did you know Wingfield?

R: Very well. He was a very brash sort of fellow, and he surrounded himself with his old cronies, who were able to follow his least whim. I never cared for him.

M: Was it the man himself, or was it his policies?

R: I didn't like the man. Policies either.

M: What didn't you like about him personally?

R: Well, that over-bearing attitude he had. He was good to all these people that surrounded him. Many of them I can recall the names of and some are good men too, a few. But most of them were just followers. I didn't really like him because of some of the things that he did, but I couldn't recall any incident at the moment. History has dealt very kindly with him, too.

M: It has? I think his memoirs have been taped, but they are not allowed to be released for a few more years. I think they are in the archives.

R: His boy may have done that, but George died shortly after the Depression.

M: Was it the Depression that killed him, the loss of his money?

R: He might have got ahold of some bad whiskey. He drank heavily.

M: How was it that you came into contact with him?

R: He and my father had been in Tonopah together in the early days. He was an acquaintance of many years.

M: Did your father know Pat McCarran?

R: Very well. Very well.

M: Did you know Pat McCarran?

R: Very well.

M: Would you like to talk about him?

R: Yes, I would. I didn't like Pat. As the years rolled on, I disliked him more. He ran the state. He selected the governors and everyone, and the first time he got a bad break was when old Carville was elected. Ted Carville, one of the finest men who ever set foot in the State of Nevada, a fine gentleman. I presume some of his children are still alive up there around Carson. Pat and Carville didn't get along too well, or at all. Pat did everything he could to hurt Carville. He was a very deserving sort of man; and the state deserved him too. So he was elected for 2 terms, and the second term he ran for Senator, and in the meantime he had appointed Berkley Bunker. And Pat back there in Washington overcame Bunker to the extent that Bunker followed Pat instead of Carville.

M: Bunker and Carville?

R: Yes.

M: What are some of your recollections of McCarran?

R: Well, offhand, I just disliked everything he did and everything about him. He ran over the State of Nevada like a herd of cattle. He was good only to his friends. That was the way it was. Of course his friends were the old Wingfield crowd.

M: Oh, he was with the Wingfield crowd. How about the Pittmans; did you

know them?

R: Very well. Key I knew very well. He was a good man, very bright. He was a great orator, and he had a tremendous influence in the Senate because of his brains and his wit and so forth; whereas Pat just went through roughshod. He was admired; I don't know anyone that admired Pat too much, except the people he favored. Pittman, though I wasn't particularly fond of him, was a mental giant in the Senate.

M: What about Pittman's brother? Did you know him?

R: Key was a very, very good man, but Vail didn't have the stature Key did. He got to be governor through his own kind of connections. That was prior to Carville. And he was a good man. I never knew anything about him that wasn't favorable.

CHAPTER TWO

M: Did you know Tasker Oddie?

R: Yes, but not very well. He was a chap that tried hard. I don't know what he did, or how he did it or anything else, but that was the general opinion at the time.

M: Did you know Jim Butler at all?

R: No, he was before my time.

M: So what happened after the Depression ruined your father's lumber business?

R: Well, he formed a realization corporation and sold off all the assets.

M: Was a realization corporation a bankruptcy kind of thing?

R: That's what it amounted to. We had to have a vast amount of money at times. For instance, we'd have 20 or 30 cars of moldings and doorstocks in

transit. Now you had to have paper there to cover them. The bank debts were a good deal of it. And then the mill in Verdi burned down. We had 5 million feet of logs in the woods, and 5 million in the pond and on the deck. So we had to build another mill. We built a little circular mill, and sawed up those logs.

M: Did the mill burn before the crash?

R: Yes, it was just a jerrybuilt mill to cut up those logs. A lot of money in those logs, and all prime stuff too.

M: What did your father do then when they sold off the assets?

R: Well, he and I ran around the country looking for a place to land, because we had nothing there any more. So we came through here, Beatty, and there was this old estate, the Shirk Estate. It included the old Beatty Ranch and the big store down here, big ironclad building, and quite a lot of property around town. My father had some mining interests around here, which never proved to be anything.

M: Was it while he had the lumber mill that he had the mining interests?

R: No. We acquired them after. There was an interim period between the Depression and our coming here.

M: Now, when did they sell off the assets?

R: Right after the Depression, 1929. We had built the mill and cut the logs, straightened things up and then we quit.

M: And then how long did you look before you found Beatty?

R: Oh, we went all over the state. We knew the workings of the state, knew how to get along here, and with people. And liked them.

Well, my father and I got here on a trip New Year's Eve of '29 and '30. We stayed here for a while looking at a property up here at Chloride Cliff, and that was all we did until this Shirk Estate became available.

M: Was there a lot of mining activity in the area at that time?

R: Well, there were hopes that there would be. Rhyolite wasn't completely gone; Pioneer wasn't; 2 or 3 more areas around here were busy. There was Crowell, for one, his fluorspar mine, and there was a little going out at Pioneer.

M: Was there anything there at Carrara at that time?

R: No. The mill was there, and much of the machinery. That was quite an operation. It had big lathes and all the rest of it, turning out marble. They imported the workers from the marble mines in Vermont, and they cut these great blocks out—oh, about as long as that counter there, about 12-15 feet. There's 2 or 3 of them lying up there yet that they didn't bring down. They had a little electric railroad; they generated enough power going down to haul the empties back up.

M: Well, that was before you came here, wasn't it?

R: Yes, that was before I came here.

M: Now about the Shirk Estate. Who was Shirk?

R: I have no idea. His daughter came up and sold us the store and some property in town, and the ranch and the water system.

M: Was that the old Beatty Ranch, Old Man Beatty's ranch?

R: Yes. It's all still there, 700 or 800 acres and the water system, which was very important to us.

M: Was there a water system in town at the time?

R: After a fashion. Dad had the water to supply the railroad which was still running. They were hooked up to it, and I presume the public service commission was going to make somebody furnish the railroad the water for their locomotives. So we patched the pipe and cut it and distributed it to all these buildings and outlets around town. Most of them didn't get

water; they had to carry it. There was some income from it--\$4 a month per customer, and they raised hell if we charged them \$5 and I pay \$100 here now.

M: So, it was you and your father who were partners.

R: And my brother Norman. Robert was too young to be involved yet. He just dumped the whole family in.

M: Do you remember how much you paid for the estate or what the terms were or anything?

R: I don't know; I remember we found \$10,000 somewhere. Probably a relative some place. And I don't remember him paying any more for it. The store was fully equipped; everything was in it, scales. It was right beyond Bobby's [Revert] service station down here, just north of that on that same lot.

M: Where did you get the water for the system?

R: There is a big spring on the middle of the Shirk Estate thing there on the Beatty Ranch. The water was collected there and piped around. We put in new pipelines, and we finally put in two 8-inch pipelines to carry the water away from the spring down to the distribution.

M: Did you do this right away, or did it take you a period of years?

R: Oh, no, it took two years. Then the Health Department, or somebody, came down here and analyzed the water, and found out that all the children in the area, Indians particularly, had brown teeth. There was too much fluoride in it, and they told us we'd have to correct it. We said, "That's fine; we'll correct it; how do you do it?" Well, here's a man from New York or somewhere who can do it for a vast amount of money--impossible for us to even think about it. So we turned it all over to this water company--the one that's here now--except the water on the ranch and the 2 big

acreage lines.

M: Oh, you sold it, or just gave it to them?

R: Oh, I've forgotten the details. I don't think there was anything to sell; they couldn't sell it; they couldn't use it.

M: Yes, so what year was that?

R: That was along in the '30s, maybe even '40.

M: So what did the town do for water then; did they continue distributing it?

R: Well, they went down and dug a well down in the middle of the ballpark. That was more contaminated than ours, but they had a source, and they started to use that. And then they went up here in the mountains and drilled some wells, allegedly a loop thing. They still get the water out of the ballpark. Nobody's using ours.

M: If nobody uses that water, what happens to the water?

R: Goes on down the river. My sister-in-law and a couple of other settlers up there use it, but they're adults and they like it. We don't charge for it.

M: Could you describe what the town looked like when you arrived here about 1930 and what the surrounding area was like, Rhyolite and Pioneer and so on?

R: There were a few people in each town, old settlers that had a shelter there. In Pioneer a fellow by the name of Rube Bryan had the Mayflower mine, and it was like a store. It had everything in it, assaying office and everything was there. Not more than 6 or 7 people were living in Pioneer then.

M: What was happening over at Rhyolite then, about 1930? Were there still buildings in Rhyolite ?

R: Nothing was happening that I remember very accurately, but there were quite a few buildings.

M: How many people would you guess were living in Rhyolite at the time? Can you remember any specific people that you knew there?

R: Not offhand. Probably tomorrow I can think of a half a dozen, but there was really very little there. There were some buildings, and some of the mining equipment was still on the ground, and they all left. They didn't have any of the new processes that they have now. Very probably, some of these things would work over there very well now.

M: The heap leaching things?

R: Yes, I think there is a man over there trying it, name of Carsy. At the Mayflower in Pioneer we did quite well until we got the tanks all full. They had several 50-ton tanks, for cyaniding, leaching canvas on the bottom and all that sort of thing. They had a railroad ore car underneath, and the stuff in there was almost impossible to get out. We cleaned them 2 or 3 times, but that was it. There just wasn't enough manpower in the country in those days. That was the extent of our operation at Pioneer.

M: What was going on out at Chloride Cliff?

R: There are 2 or 3 prospects out there, if that's what you could call them. They produced some ore. A fellow by the name of Louie McCrae worked there for many years, single-handed, and that was quite a distinguished family, the McCrae family, here in Beatty. Well of course they are all dead, including Louie now. And Louie shipped some ore; it ran high in gold but it was a lead carbonate, and there was nothing you could do to the ore except ship it to a smelter. That beat Chloride Cliff. Crowell has some big holdings out there too.

M: But it's gold and lead carbonate?

R: A type of lead.

M: What other communities or activities were going on in the area when you arrived?

R: Well, the Death Valley operations. The Furnace Creek people were there. They had the borax mines.

M: There were the Eagle and the Harmony; were they still going?

R: I think so. I never was very well acquainted with that. Lisle can tell you that in detail.

M: OK. Can you describe Beatty for us at that time.

R: Well, Beatty had 3 stores. Paul Richings had one, Cy Johnson had one, we had one.

M: Who was your market for 3 stores and what kind of inventory did you have?

R: Well there were people scattered throughout the area, enough people to sustain it. It was mostly canned goods and of course we ran a butcher shop too.

M: Where did you get your meat?

R: From Ottumwa, Iowa. It came refrigerated on the railroad.

M: I'll be darned. Did you sell mining supplies or anything?

R: Yes. Coal for one. You see, people burned these old ties, which are not satisfactory, when the railroad discarded them. So we'd buy coal by the carload and sack it, and sell it in the sacks--which was a good business. We got that from a big company back in Utah somewhere.

M: Did you sell clothing? Picks and shovels, blasting supplies, dynamite and everything?

R: No clothing, but all the others.

M: Where did you keep the dynamite and caps?

R: We had a little storage place up here on the hill to the east on the old road up there a ways.

M: OK. Who were some of the people in the town at the time that were prominent people in the community?

R: Well, there was Crowell, George Greenwood, who ran the Exchange Club. And then Richings, who had a little store, and then there was Johnny Konzos, who had a supply arrangement. You couldn't call it a store. He had a few supplies. And Joel Bryan, who was allegedly a mining engineer.

M: You didn't think he was, eh?

R: Well, I never let him do any of it. A very, very highly educated man. I guess one of the best men we had here was Dave Asplin, and he did a world of good for the town just helping people find their way around and so forth. He was the railroad agent here. He had come from Tonopah. I think he was at one time or another the division engineer for the Tonopah and Goldfield, one of the railroads up there. Hell of a good man. And he had been demoted down to the point where he was merely a telegraph operator here. And of course there was all that crowd at Scotty's.

M: They were building Scotty's at that time. Was there a big crowd there then?

R: Oh yes. He had every Indian he could find. Everything came in on the railroad, because the railroad came down that far. Let's see, there were 5 railroads here as I remember: Tonopah and Goldfield, Bullfrog and Goldfield, Tonopah and Tidewater.

M: Was the old LV&T, the Las Vegas and Tonopah, gone by the time you got here?

R: The LV&T. Yes, that was gone, at least as far as I know.

M: Well, there wasn't any community sewer system or electric power, was

there?

R: There was nothing! So we devised a little generating plant to supply our house and the store.

CHAPTER THREE

M: You mentioned that you had gotten into the oil business. Could you tell us how and when that happened?

R: Well, the Union Oil Company and the Standard Oil Company came here before I came during the Wahmonie or one of these things in the mining history. They came for some occasion; I can't recall what right now. They had some storage here, gasoline and oil and so on. They had an agent in each case, and business got so bad that they had to do something with it, and rather than tear it up, they paid us agents. We took over and went from there. Old Riching, who had a little store, had the Standard Oil. We had the Union.

M: Were there any others?

R: No, that's all. And they kind of came in by rail. I think we were just an interim thing to let them get their accounts out of here or whatever, but we kept it and ran along with it, and we built a service station and started in the service station business. We had stations all over this country at one time. My attorney, Ralph Denton, sent me that picture [on the wall] of our little service station at Goldpoint.

M: What was the condition of the highway then, what is now 95?

R: It was dirt road. It was hard; they had drags going up and down occasionally then to drag out the big boulders that erupted. It was terrible. You wouldn't take a car to Vegas in less than 2 days. One day

down and one day back.

M: How fast could you go on it?

R: Oh, I'd say safely 15 to 20 miles an hour. And you had to drive all the time.

M: There were 2 gas stations in Beatty. Where else did you put gas stations after you got going?

R: Oh, we had one here; we had one at Rhyolite. Heisler is one of the people that you should have for Rhyolite. I'll tell you about him. He bought an old caboose, set out there for his footing. He put a pump in front of it and sold gasoline there.

M: Were there enough people coming in Rhyolite for him to sell gas? There weren't that many people living there, were there?

R: Oh, no, it wasn't a matter of living there, people going through. There's people all over this desert, passing.

M: What was happening in Goldpoint then?

R: There were a couple of old settlers up there, old prospectors, and it was easier for us to bring it up and put it in that pump than for them to haul it from someplace. We eventually had service stations at Pahrump and Ash Meadows.

M: Where was your station in Ash Meadows?

R: I couldn't tell you that any more. I went down the other day, and I didn't even know the country.

M: Was there a town over at Ash Meadows then?

R: A few settlers. Like everyone else, it was better for them to buy it wholesale than it was to haul it in in a barrel themselves. And they were always out, you know. So, where else? We had a station in Hot Springs up the road here, one at Springdale. I can't remember them all. We'd put up

a pump anywhere anybody wanted one. It was just a matter of a small tank and a pump. We could buy a pump in those days for \$35 to \$40. Visible pump, you could see the gas that went up into the globe, you know. You know a surprising thing. Well, anyway, people came through this country and bought every one of those. Took them down and made lamps for their gateways.

M: They are worth a lot of money now. Well, tell me a little bit about the petroleum business then from your prospective. What was it like? What were the problems you faced?

R: Just a matter of distances and those sort of things. Collecting for it after you sold it.

M: And they brought it in on the railroad?

R: Yes. In the beginning they controlled the inventory. They would come occasionally and check it, and we would have to pay for everything that was sold. Finally, it got so we paid for it when it came in--with the assistance of a few banks.

M: Where did the fuel come from?

R: It came from down in southern California during the '30s and '40s.

M: How had things changed by 1940 from when you had come in here in 1930?

R: Well, the principal industry here, the real backbone of this whole area, was the bootleg business.

M: Oh, tell me about that.

R: Oh, they were beautiful days. Very, very many people had a still. And practically everyone made beer; I don't know of anyone that didn't. You got a couple of crocks and some yeast, couple of cans of Budweiser malt, throw it all together and keep it warm, and.... You could smell the town coming.

Old John Cobb; I want to tell you about him too; he was very prominent in those days. He and Heisler.

So, these people had a chance to take their time and do a little better job, and they'd try harder. They wouldn't knock you down but that you could get up again. And it was good for you, witnessed by the fact that I'm 82 years old.

M: Did people make it for their own consumption or did they sell it?

R: All they needed and sold it. Some of us went as far as Ely, and vice versa. It went everywhere. You had it in jugs, or you'd have in barrels, anything you liked.

M: Was this in the '30s or the '20s?

R: Well, '20s and '30s, till about '33, I think.

M: OK. Where did they get their meal or their grain?

R: It wasn't made that way; it was made with sugar. We'd bring it in on the railroad and sell it to them out of our store.

M: So you had a good idea of what was going on by who was buying the sugar.

R: There was no question about what was going on. Everybody knew everything. Some of these buildings still standing had a big still in the basement. Along Main Street here, I guess there were about 6 or 7 stills.

M: How did they fire them?

R: Kerosene.

M: Was it good whiskey?

R: Not by today's standards. They thought it was wonderful. There was quite a competition. Your whiskey is better than his whiskey, and so forth. And that of course was true, because the various batches came off differently.

M: Was there ever any trouble from the law?

R: Always. But it was more or less controlled by the prohibition people. They weren't exactly honest. I remember we used to go down to the railroad station and we'd hear this--my father and I could both read the instruments, you know--and they'd have a message come in, "Blackbirds are flying today," or something, "headed your way," or, you know, anything. So they'd get prepared.

M: So that they were always tipped off as to when the feds were coming.

R: Nearly always, yes. Then they'd arrange arrangements: "Well it's not your turn to get knocked off this time." So it would make it look good. And they'd go up before the judge, and he'd fine them a few dollars and that would be it.

M: Was there ever any problem with the local police, or was that mainly the federals?

R: The local police were something you wouldn't believe. There's another name, John Vignolo. He was the sheriff of this area, under Bill Thomas, Nye County Sheriff, who was a fine, honest man.

Old John was an old Italian, and he was given to make a little himself, I think. We had a remarkable lack of crime in this country. He was waiting among them--he was a big man--and when he'd tell you to cut out what you were doing, you did it. Or you'd suffer the consequences. Oh, he might throw you in jail or he might rough you up a bit. He was a hell of a good man, so, you know, despite anything that might have happened in the liquor industry, he was genuinely a fine person. So that was a great source of income.

M: Did any of it go out on the railroad?

R: No, but it would go out to Death Valley, here and there. California

people would come over here and get some. It all sold very readily.

M: So, during the prohibition, the production of alcohol was an important part of the local economy. Could you tell me what other things were important in the economy during this period?

R: Mining.

M: How did the Depression affect the mining industry? They raised the price of gold about then, didn't they?

R: Yes, but it didn't seem to take hold of this area. They raised it from \$20 to \$30.

M: Yes, but you didn't notice that much impact?

R: No. Other than that we would have a lot of people through here prospecting.

M: Was there a fair amount of active mining going on during this period?

R: No.

M: Well, what other things affected the local economy then? Was the railroad important in the economy?

R: Yes, they employed several people. They brought in all the supplies for everything that you could think of. They sold a lot of coal.

M: Was there any tourism or anything like that, aside from prospectors?

R: Very little. Of course the tourists went into Death Valley, such as it was. Some of it went through here of course.

M: Yes, but the roads were so bad then. When did they pave the road?

R: I don't remember, but Dodge Brothers were the contractors. It made a big difference. Then we had a stage line, the Mikulich family, Sebastian Mikulich, started the LV&TR busline in the '30s, and it's still running. And they of course have sold it now, but that was a good outfit, good people. Everybody drove the stage, little kids, big ones, old men,

everybody; so it was a family-operated affair. In addition to his little freight business, he carried the mail. He lived in Las Vegas. He made a trip each way every other day to Tonopah. Then he'd run every day, twice a day.

M: Was the stage after they paved the road? Did he start the stage after they quit the T&T?

R: It ran on the dirt road. The LV&T wasn't running then. It was the Tonopah and Tidewater. He came on a little earlier than that, because the T&T was only running once a week by that time.

M: OK. Were there any gross or significant changes in Beatty from 1930 to 1940?

R: Well, the biggest change came when Mercury started.

M: Well that wasn't until '50. Between '30 and '40, was there any change?

R: Difficult to recall.

M: OK. So we've gotten the history up to 1940. Did you put a power system in the town?

R: Yes. About '40. A fellow by the name of Mardis had a generator down here, and he was supplying a few people and had a franchise from the state Public Service Commission. So anyway we bought that.

M: When did Mardis start his? Was it going when you came?

R: Oh, no. It was a very, very small operation. He ran it at different hours. It was broken down a good deal of the time. You couldn't depend on it for refrigeration or anything, so we bought the franchise from him, the old engine there. Then I prevailed on the Small Business Administration to go along with us, on a decent outfit.

M: And this is 1940? Before the war?

R: Oh, yes. I think. I don't remember the exact year. So we bought 4

big engines, big ones, International diesel, with 50-kilowatt generators. It was well engineered and ran beautifully. No attendant; nothing like that. Start and stop it. Change the oil. So then we proceeded to wire the town, with what poles we could scrounge on the desert here.

M: You did this with an SBA loan?

R: Yes, that's the way we did it. We put lights in wherever anyone wanted them, street lights, everything. And it worked very well, the combination of engines and so forth. All you'd have to do is go by there once or twice a day and check them, and it ran 24 hours a day. Then we put in electric refrigeration for everyone and sold a lot of that.

M: Oh, you sold the refrigerators in your store?

R: Yes. Arranged for them to get credit for them. And that's when the town kind of woke up, with the lights.

M: And this was all before the war?

R: Yes.

M: You said that you had 4 engines; you always had reliability.

R: Yes, we could get by with one, and during the heavy load we would have 2, and occasionally we'd have to have the third one, and never 4. You had to start them, but we had the gauges in our houses and all to tell us what was going on.

M: Oh, I see. Were your father and brothers still involved with you at this time?

R: Yes.

M: And they all lived here in Beatty?

R: Yes. Norm has that little brick house you see as you come into town on that side of the road, right across the street from that hotel [Stagecoach] up there.

M: OK, you were a single man when you came to Beatty, but were you still single in 1940?

R: No, we [Opal and I] were married in '38.

M: Was your wife a local girl? Did you meet her here in Beatty?

R: No, I met her here, but she came here from the south somewhere down there.

M: What brought her family to Beatty?

R: Oh, one of these mining fantasies. Her uncle had a property out here, and he prevailed on the family to come out and join him.

CHAPTER FOUR

M: Art, you said you wanted to go back and pick up on something.

R: Well, Heisler. H. Heisler; I can't recall his first name. He was related to one of our established men here, a fellow by the name of Wes Morland. Heisler's wife and Wes Morland were brother and sister, so he came out here and bought that little railroad station in Rhyolite and the box car, and he opened up the bar, but he didn't sell any whiskey. He stayed here for many years until he died. Nice man.

Johnny Konzos was one of the old timers here, one of the very oldest. He had this little supply store, and he bootlegged and so forth. Let me see, who else did I want to talk to you about. Oh, Johnny Cyty was here, and he had a very fine distilling operation too. He's been dead these many years. I still know where the still is.

M: Well, OK, we've kind of gotten it up to about 1940. How did the war affect things then?

R: Well, of course, many of the young men left. And it had a beneficial

effect because of the traffic through here.

M: There was war traffic through, or more traffic. Then it wasn't too long until they started trucking out of Gabbs; did the magnesium down in Henderson affect Beatty?

R: No. It had no effect on us. The trucks didn't even stop.

M: How did the war affect your fuel business?

R: Oh, it was good.

M: When they rationed gas during World War II, did that affect your business?

R: Not at all.

M: Lisle mentioned that the war had a pretty negative effect on mining. The gold mines shut down, but other mines like tungsten and so on and the fluorspar kept going.

R: The mines, such as they were, couldn't find the labor. And many other things.

M: OK. So, aside from people leaving town to be in the army, do you recall many changes with World War II?

R: Well, Bob was gone, my youngest brother; he was in the army. My wife and I went to Reno for a few years, and then I came back and went to work for Johnny Cavanaugh in Tonopah running the Mizpah, and that was during the war.

M: Why did you leave town? Didn't you still have the businesses?

R: Oh, it wasn't necessary that I be here.

M: What year did you leave?

R: At the beginning of the war.

M: So you left when the war began, shortly after you had built the light plant. How long did you stay in Reno?

R: I was equipment superintendent of the highway department there in Reno. In the middle of the war I gave that up, which was a mistake, and went to Tonopah to run Johnny Cavanaugh's Mizpah. They had a big air base there, and there were lots of soldiers. Mizpah was really a going concern. Cavanaugh had a Union Oil business too. That's how we got acquainted; he and I were partners in Union Oil in Vegas for a while prior to the war.

M: How did that go?

R: Well, it went along all right. Charlie didn't like it down there with John Strauthers. Very able man, but he didn't like it down there. He wanted to go back to Tonopah. Times were awful tough down there, of course; things were very bad just prior to the war.

M: Did you have the whole Union Oil concession in Vegas or just part of it?

R: Yes, the whole works. Of course Vegas was nothing like it is now. We were down there yesterday and went by the old Moulin Rouge. It's now kind of a colored jumping-off place. I remember when that was the biggest thing in Vegas.

M: So Cavanaugh had bought the Mizpah, and then he wanted you to come up there and run it for him. Tell me about running the Mizpah.

R: Well, it was just big business all the time. Cavanaugh was a very good manager, considering the fact that he had cows and ranches and Union Oil and everything else that took a lot of his time. So I concentrated on the hotel. Of course we had big gambling there.

M: Did you have to be licensed in those days?

R: No. If it was, he did it. It was a hell of an operation. You couldn't get into the place after the airport shut down for the day. No food, no nothing like that, just gambling and liquor.

M: Oh, they didn't have restaurants in the Mizpah? It was just the bar and the gambling and the hotel.

R: Yes. And we shut down at a certain hour in the evening. I believe I stayed there 6 years, till the the late '40s.

M: Then what did you do?

M: We came back here. We bought a house and so forth. We picked the house up and moved it down here from Tonopah, the one that Jack Crowell is living in now. That was customary in those days. There's an old chap here from Tonopah, a cripple, who was a house-mover. He moved houses all over this desert. We lived there for several years, and then we built this place.

M: What did you do after you got back to Beatty?

R: Well, we had the Union service station, and a lot of these other service stations. We used to deliver a lot of gasoline down there where Mercury is now; people for some reason or other wanted to have it. Lathrop Wells, that was ours too.

M: Did you still have the light plant here in town?

R: Oh yes, until this chap came along and just gave us more money than we thought we should have for it, and he picked it up and moved it to the Philippines. Then this power company came in here, present outfit.

M: When did the power company come in? It was the late '50s or '60s, wasn't it?

R: Yes.

M: So, did you still have the store?

R: No, we sold the store to the Smith brothers from Silver Peak after the war. They came down for a year or two and gave it up, took all the equipment out, so we just had the bare building. My wife and I sold it to

some Mormon farmers. They came and tore it down.

M: OK. Now, when the government started Nellis bombing range out here during the war and the Tonopah range, was that a restricted area out there then? How many of your trucks were coming in there in a week?

R: Oh, we've had different amounts--3 or 4. Into there and here and other places. We were supplying the contractors and the AEC some too out there.

M: There was a station at Mercury too, wasn't there?

R: Yes, but that wasn't ours. We didn't go out of Nye County.

M: OK. Was that your franchise?

R: No, but it just happened that way. Anything beyond that was a little far for us. It wasn't that small truck deliveries aren't all right, but you had to pay the man for hours that weren't productive.

M: But you did have a station in Pahrump, you told me.

R: Yes. We had a bulk plant there too for 2 or 3 years after the war to supply the farmers and everything. The kids were pretty well grown then; they must have been 7-8 years old. Last one was born in about '40.

M: You lived in Pahrump for a while. Tell me about that.

R: It was a hard place to live; there was no power; the water was in a well that was questionable. We lived just below town maybe a mile.

M: Why did you go over there?

R: Well, that cotton outfit from southern California was going in there. A fellow by the name of Dickey was the man we dealt with, but he was a subsidiary of one of the big cotton companies. Cotton did very well.

M: Was this the '50s or '40s?

R: Let's see, Bobby was a little kid there, so it must have been the '40s. Pahrump was nothing like it is now. Of course, it's really a very difficult place to live at the best, so I don't hold much hope for these

folks that are buying real estate down there.

M: You think they are going to lose their money?

R: Well, either they are going to lose that or their enthusiasm, one or the other.

CHAPTER FIVE

M: Art, I have some questions here from the day before yesterday when we talked. You mentioned after we turned the tape recorder off last time that people here had lived a "circumscribed" existence. What did you mean by that?

R: Well, mileages to any place that might harbor criminals or potential criminals or what-have-you. They are not exposed to crime. We had a car stolen the other day. It was the first criminal act I've heard in a long time. We have a low crime rate and an absence of adverse weather. We have very little snow, if any. Summers rarely get over 100, which is common everywhere, and we seem to be in a selected position.

M: Another question is about the Indian community that used to be in town. Could you tell me about that community?

R: I can't, but I was talking to Bombo about it yesterday, and he said that he'd be very glad to talk to you. He has a good memory; he's a good man.

M: He's Indian?

R: Yes, he's Jane Cottonwood's husband.

M: OK, good. I'll talk to him then. Last time you mentioned a man named Spike Cottonwood, who worked on the power plant. Could you tell me about him and what he did.

R: Well, he just grew up like topsy, here. He was born here, I presume; I always knew him. He just started in climbing poles and hanging wire for us. That was when we had the original little engine. Then we got the big engines, and he advised us and helped us install them and wired them all up. He was a very remarkable man. Incidentally, I'd like to have a copy of this to send to him.

M: Oh, sure. Where is he now?

R: Somewhere in California. Bombo can tell you where. He's a supervisor for some big power company. He got his start climbing these secondhand poles we have.

M: Secondhand poles. Where did you get them?

R: Oh, we rustled them all over the desert. They're some in Rhyolite, some here and some there. Had been there for ages, you know. We cut the bottom off and set them in. We didn't care how high they were or anything else. It was pretty much a haywire start. We had all good poles and all good wire when we finished. Then we sold it. We ran it right up till the transfer of title.

M: Who did you sell it to?

R: It escapes me at the moment. Anyway, he bought it, ran it for a short time. Of course they had to; they couldn't desert the town, and then he connected up with this power company.

M: Another thing you mentioned was that one of the problems that you had with the oil business was collecting. Then I remembered that a lot of times in mining camps and towns like this, the store always gave a lot of credit. Did you give credit at the store and how did that work?

R: Yes, we gave lots of credit, and in the store it wasn't so bad.

Gasoline dealt with much more money. When you sold a man 500 or 1000

gallons of gasoline, it was quite a chunk of money. With a few groceries, he could probably overcome that, and naturally he would because he had to continue to eat. We gave credit to practically everyone in town at one time or another.

M: Did you get stiffed much? I mean did people run out on you very often?

R: Oh, it happened, of course, but not to a degree that worried us.

M: Most people paid their bill, then. Did you have to carry some people quite a while?

R: Oh, as I recall, sometimes a month or 2 or 3. But that was rather rare; they generally paid up in 6 weeks or something.

M: I think people nowadays would have a hard time understanding how you could go down to the local grocery store and get credit. It's probably a pretty rare thing now.

And then you mentioned briefly banks. Tell me about how you used banks and what role they played in your business.

R: We banked in Tonopah for many years, and we banked in Las Vegas for many years. In Tonopah the bank was the First National Bank, which was managed by Red O'Leary and old friends of ours. Oh, it was very good. We could call them on the phone and get a line of credit for a few days if we needed it.

M: Did you have to have the line of credit pretty often with all the oil you had in shipment and everything? You'd just call them up and you had it right there?

R: Yes. It wouldn't do to drive up there, for a matter of that importance, you know. Later we shifted to Vegas. I don't know why we did, but we did. I think it was more a personal matter. Each family had a personal bank account, you know, and I guess we became acquainted with

other banks, and moved for that reason. Tonopah was always very good to us.

M: Also, you mentioned the local sheriff, Vignolo. Would you want to say a little more about him?

R: Oh yes, he was quite a guy. I was talking about him with Bombo yesterday, and how nothing bad ever happened here. I think we had one shooting, and that was all. That was before my time, but Bombo can tell you. Vig was a very fine old gentleman, an old Italian. He was Bill Thomas's deputy.

M: Could you tell me a little about Bill Thomas?

R: Yes, I guess my family knew him from Tonopah for many, many years, even before I was born, my father had. He ran the local butcher shop and finally was elected sheriff. He was one of the most loved men in the county, very highly regarded in every respect.

M: And who were the judges during this period? Does anything stand out in your mind there? Did you have a Justice of the Peace in Beatty?

R: Oh yes. I've forgotten who he was now. As I recall, he only got a few dollars a month for the job. Bombo will know.

M: OK. How about any of the judges in Tonopah? Who was before Boko?

R: Was it Breens? It'd be in this book here somewhere.

M: Another question is, how did the paving of the road in the 1930s make a difference to the town?

R: Well, it made all the difference in the world. It allowed people to get out of town, and safely, and it brought a certain amount of tourist traffic and through traffic to us. Otherwise, if you wanted to go to Las Vegas over paved roads, you had to make a trip clear around the world, practically, to get to US 15 or whatever was paved down there. There were

lots of people who were afraid of these roads, and I don't blame them.

M: Were tires a constant problem with your cars and trucks?

R: We just would buy a bunch of tires and put them on spare wheels and store them. When we wanted a tire, we had a flat, we'd take a whole wheel and tire off.

M: Prior to when they developed the Test Site in 1950, what was out there on all that land that's now restricted?

R: There was one ranch, I believe, way out there. I don't remember who had it, but there was one, maybe 2, grazing propositions. A fellow might have a little building and store a few bales of hay in it for his horse.

M: Were there any ranch houses out there where people lived or local people who had the grazing rights?

R: Not that I recall. Bobby could tell you, or Bombo. Those 2 kids were all over the desert, and Bobby delivered gasoline to remote places when he grew up.

M: When they made that a restricted area out there, did it have much effect on the town?

R: Oh, not really. There was nothing out there for them to restrict as far as we were concerned. Of course, I was one of the first people out there, so far as the Test Site was concerned; and, when we went out there originally, we didn't even know what was going on.

M: Oh, they didn't tell you. You were delivering gas out there, but they didn't tell you what they were going to do. What did you think they were going to do?

R: I don't know, but they were very inquisitive about our going out there.

M: When did you finally find out? When you saw a big flash in the sky?

R: No, when they started to give badges and such as that. The big flash

in the sky didn't come until much later. I was there. I don't believe there were any restrictions about who went out, as far as the people who could get as far as Mercury. Everybody went out and stood on the hill above Mercury and watched it. And then a big cloud came up and went over toward Utah. It was a dandy.

M: What did people in town think about the testing?

R: They thought it was wonderful. I presume they still do. I guess that from the beginning, during those early years at least, we were exposed as much as anyone, Bobby and me. We were out there, and neither one of us ever had a bad day.

M: Yes. Then it doesn't worry you, huh?

R: Not at all.

M: Would you say that that's pretty typical of most people around here; it doesn't worry them.

R: I don't think it does. All of the fellows that I've worked with in the later years visited one of the big sites or the other during the tests. Outside of these people who wanted to create some disturbance, I never knew of anybody getting hurt there. Never knew of anybody even complaining.

M: Why do you think the complaints have started?

R: Because it's available. Hell, they complain about everything. Just like these Test Site protesters. It was on all 3 channels of the television this morning. Here's old Stick Davis with them shoulder to shoulder holding back this crowd on the highway. They said that Nye County was complaining because it's costing them \$68,000 a year, and they didn't have it, which of course is not true. They do have it.

M: You don't buy the argument that it's costing the county too much money?

R: Oh yes I do. But for what? I think if they want to kick those people

out, the AEC should pay for it, give them the \$68,000 or whatever it is. It's all right to use the people if they have them and they know how to protect the place, why not use them. Some hotheads, for what reason I don't know, have jumped on this as a point where they can raise hell.

M: Tell me something more about when during World War II you moved up to Reno. You were a road supervisor or something, weren't you, and you said that you made a mistake in leaving that job.

R: Equipment engineer for the highway department. Oh, I made a mistake leaving there, and I made a mistake leaving Cavanaugh too.

M: You mean in the Mizpah? You wished you had stayed in those places.

R: Oh yes, Cavanaugh went on to great things, and I was part of his organization.

M: Do you feel like you would have done better in life if you had stayed?

R: Well, I couldn't have done any worse. [laughter] Oh, no. It was a good life in both places. I was very close to Governor Carville and liked him very much; it was a pleasure to work for him.

M: You got to see the Governor personally?

R: Yes, he and I were very close friends. He was a very fine gentleman, in all cases. We traveled a lot together; in fact I never knew him to hold a thought that was malicious or mad. He was a good man all the way. And his wife too; she was just as nice. My wife and I stayed at the Governor's mansion, time after time.

M: How long did you manage the Mizpah?

R: I was there 5 or 6 years while the war was on.

M: And so, then, it was in the late '40s when you left the Mizpah? Do you remember what year that was?

R: No, I can't offhand. We moved the gasoline business down to Mercury,

so to speak. That was our big outlet.

M: When did you sell the store and who did you sell it to?

R: Just after the war. I guess I was at Mercury then. Smith brothers of Silver Peak bought it and operated it for a year or 2. I think they wanted to go back to Silver Peak; they liked it there, but didn't like it here for what reason, I don't know. They took all the equipment out of the store. The old building and the lot my wife and I bought back from them. Some farmers tore the store down.

M: Then what did Beatty do for a store then?

R: Oh, there was a little store up there next door to the Exchange Club, where it was up until 2 or 3 years ago. Thomas and Johnson ran it. Mel Eades and his uncle, Joe Andre, took it over from them. He's now the Reading Icedman, you know, from Vegas.

M: What brought you back to Beatty after working at the Mizpah?

R: Oh, I presume Mercury and the chance to keep this thing going. We had a pretty big business here in our own right. Gasoline and so forth.

M: Who was looking after the business while you were up there?

R: My brothers.

M: Was your father still living then?

R: Yes, he was; just prior to Mercury he died.

M: Did he remain in Beatty or did he move somewhere else in his later years?

R: No, he died here and that was all there was to it. So did my mother.

M: Did your mother outlive your father and did she remain in Beatty too?

R: Right to the end, yes, her end.

M: When did she pass away?

R: She was 90-something. It's on the tombstone up here in the cemetery,

which incidentally would be a good place to take a cruise and read the names. You could come up with a whole lot.

M: That's a good idea. What was Beatty like about 1950, about the time the testing began?

R: Well, it had improved a whole lot from the early days, and it was paying more attention to tourists and to traffic that originated at the Test Site or resulted from the Test Site. People were building new homes and so forth.

M: Did the Test Site mean much employment to the people in Beatty?

R: It did originally.

M: Why do you think that was true originally but not now?

R: Well, now they have a double-barreled road down there going in to Vegas, and we're equidistant. That was the place where most of the help lived, and they subsequently came on with busses and such as that.

Originally, everybody had to devise a ride of his own.

M: And when they did that, a lot of people lived in Beatty. But, when they built that highway and put in busses, then more people went to Vegas.

R: Yes.

M: It looks like the government could have done more to keep people living in Beatty, doesn't it?

R: I think it would have been wise to; however, after they built that other half of the road, they felt that they could steer them down that way easier.

M: Why do you think it would have been wise for them to have steered more here to Beatty?

R: Well, they would have gotten away from some of their troubles. People would have been happier here, a whole lot, I think. They have room, space,

school situation is better, oh, any number of reasons when you stop and dig them out.

M: One more question. I was a little unclear about when it was that you lived in Pahrump?

R: That was after the war. We went down there, and I put in a bulk plant and a service station, the whole bit.

M: When they gave the contract or let somebody else into Mercury, was that when you went to Pahrump?

R: I think so, yes.

M: What was the status of mining during the 1950s? Was there much mining going on, as you recall?

R: No, mining has been very dull for many years. But we have some silver here; I see silver is \$6.86 today.

CHAPTER SIX

M: When they stopped testing in the atmosphere with the nuclear weapons and started in the underground, did that affect the community in any way? You didn't find miners moving into town here or anything? I remember I worked out there in 1958, and I remember a couple of guys who lived in Beatty. One of them we called Cotton, I remember, and I just wondered if there were other miners.

R: No. I would say at the best there were a dozen or so lived here, probably more now than at any time.

M: Were you ever involved much with local government and county government?

R: Not I. Bobby's been the only one, my brother Bob. He was an

assemblyman, and he was always involved in something, sheriff's office or something. When Mercury got going good, he went down there as chief deputy for Nye County; he was the law down there.

M: Did you have much contact with Roy Neighbors when he was down there?

R: Yes. I liked Roy; I think he is a very bright man, very energetic, very nervous. He was one of my brother's deputies down there.

M: Your brother had that job for quite a while, didn't he?

R: Yes he did.

M: When did they start the Beatty dump out here, the low-level repository?

R: Oh, it's only been a few years back, 5 or 6 or 7 maybe.

M: How did the community feel about that in the beginning when they started that?

R: Delighted! They were very careful to give everyone a job that was worthy of it, and they all lived here. And they were all selected people; they all kept their mouths shut; they didn't tell anything about the company's business. Everyone knew it anyway.

M: What do you mean "the company's business"?

R: Oh, what they were burying and how much and so forth. And how big the hole was. I imagine that if you needed any information on the thing, the best thing to do would be to go to the afternoon card party the girls held. They probably knew more than anyone.

M: So the Beatty dump made a big difference in Beatty employment?

R: Oh, yes. Big difference. I don't know how many they employed. This Ford thing has been very good for us. Well, it's coming under a cloud in that this fellow Green built these apartments over here, bought the land from me, which he didn't entirely pay for. We've been pursuing it with lawyers and everything else, and he gets one Chapter 11, where you go

bankrupt, after another and puts this thing off. In the meantime he doesn't pay the taxes. The thing's earning \$7,000 a month.

M: Was he with Ford?

R: I think. Yes, well, the Ford people live there, most of them.

M: Did Ford build the apartments?

R: No. It was Green; he built them, but at Ford's instigation, I imagine.

M: When did Ford come in to the community?

R: Oh, it's been about 5 years ago.

M: What exactly do they do out there?

R: I don't know. They seem to have more security people out there at the Peak than they have anything else. What we see of it, it's mostly all security people. I don't know what the hell they are doing, but of course who cares.

M: I wonder where the other people live? The technicians?

R: Oh, they live about town; there's some of them over there. Bobby can give you a far more accurate picture of that than I.

M: What stands out in your mind about the 1950s, in terms of your life and in terms of Beatty?

R: Well, I imagine that my parents' deaths and Mercury and the general appreciation of business, the town's growing up. You drive through here, and there's nothing but residences of one sort or another.

M: That's right, particularly to the west, it seems; yes. What do you think when you see this growth?

R: I think that it's great. I think that they will establish the water and sewer lines and all that; eventually a great many of them will be replaced by permanent structures. Because this is an ideal place to live. And the old timers, they don't want to leave. All of them that leave want

to come back, so there's a lot of good things about the place, far more than any place else I know.

M: What stands out in your mind about Beatty and your life in Beatty in the 1960s?

R: Oh, it's hard for me to run back that far and pick out anything. It was just a gradual growth. Oh, yes, we've built a house and sold a house and did this and that. My brother Norm died, and we separated our interests and made two distinct companies of it.

M: Which part of the company did you keep?

R: I kept half of what we had, but he got all the service stations and all that on the outside. I kept that big station, half of this and that and the other thing. Of course his widow has a share in this old Shirk Estate we have.

M: You still have the Shirk Estate?

R: Oh, we've got a great deal of it. The ranch.

M: Do you graze cattle, raise cattle or anything?

R: Oh, no. We tried it a time or two, but we weren't cow people, you know, and with horses particularly that wire grass up there seems to erode their teeth. So it would have to be replanted with a more suitable feed. Well, we grew hay there; you know it was a trial deal.

M: So there's no stock or anything on the land now?

R: No. I'll show it to you; we've sold off some of it. We still have the water.

M: Do you have any plans for that water, or what do you think ought to be done with that in the future?

R: I think eventually they are going to have to have it, because it's easy to handle, and there's lots of it. They will have to go out here and do

just as Walker did. Go up here on the hill or somewhere and find some more potable water. Marvin Walker, he's the manager of this water company.

M: Now, you at one time owned the water company, didn't you. What happened there?

R: I didn't sell it to anybody. I just quit because of the fluoride. They got water from the same source for a short time, and then Walker put this thing together and dug that well down at the ballpark, which is the most highly fluoridated water here, I believe, which he dilutes and sells to the community.

M: He dilutes it with water from a spring up here, is that right?

R: From wells, I think. He's forever digging one.

M: How far would you have to go on your land here to get water? Is water close to the surface here, aside from in the valley?

R: Yes, it is; it springs up on these mountains all over. You'd have to go maybe 100 feet. See, you just get down to the river bottom over there.

M: So, when you pulled out of the water business, Walker came in. Wonder why he thought he could make a go of it.

R: Well, he just built this water company himself, more or less, and then it kept getting bigger. I don't know, I don't think he had a bond issue or anything. But anyway, he got it built up.

M: Beatty doesn't have a sewer system, does it?

R: Yes. It does. Walker owns that too. It's the Beatty sewer system.

M: When did they put that in, do you remember?

R: Just a few years back.

M: And when did Walker come in, with his water? Was it when they were still testing over here in the air?

R: About that time.

M: There's a lot of water here, isn't there?

R: Man, there's so much you don't know what to do with it. Well, we used two 8-inch pipe full down to the creek, which is about 32 feet elevation.

M: That's a lot of water for Nevada, isn't it. Do you have any plans for the water?

R: Yes, we are going to wait until they run short, and let him go dig some more wells. There's several people using it yet, but we don't charge. If they want to hook on that old pipe, it's all right with me.

M: I've got a question for you that I think you might accidentally know. When Montgomery originally laid out the town site of Beatty, he didn't put it on a north-south grid. It's off a little bit. I wonder why. Have you ever heard why he did that?

R: Couldn't tell you that, no.

M: Well, then, they laid out the original town site. Then there's been all of these additions that have come on. Were they mining claims or what, do you know?

R: No, they were just sections that the government sold off, as I recall.

M: How did you acquire your land here? Was it a mining claim?

R: I think this was part of the old Shirk Estate.

M: Oh, I see. Part of the ranch?

R: Well, Shirk had everything, one way or another.

M: But you don't know who Shirk was?

R: No. Never saw the man in my life. Yes, his daughter handled it and was a very capable girl, believe me.

M: We haven't talked any about your children. How many kids do you have?

R: Two. They were born the end of the '30s and the beginning of the '40s.

My wife can tell you their birth dates. Brenda and Bobby, Robert. He is

Robert Norman and the Vegas [Revert] is Robert Alan.

M: OK, that's your brother; Robert Alan is your brother. And who's the oldest?

R: Brenda is the oldest and she lives in Carson. She's been teaching there for many years.

M: And Bobby lives in town, doesn't he?

R: What he does is questionable. [laughter]

M: Well, you must be pretty proud of him, being County Commissioner.

R: I am, I am. He's a real good businessman, and the only time I've ever heard of the county being in a wholesome position is when he was there.

M: Is that right. There's quail! [Quail are visible in the Reverts' back yard.]

R: Oh, yes. We get as many as 80 there at a time. Yes, she calls them; they'll come in.

M: We are looking at quail in his yard here in his home in Beatty, and he's put out some feed for them, and they've come in to feed on it.

R: All of a sudden the old buck will let out a squawk and they'll come in all directions. The ones with the black chests are the bucks. But we have them all day long.

M: Well, how do you see the future of the community?

R: I think it's going to go ahead real well. For what reason, I don't know, but there's nothing unfavorable here. There's bound to be people come here and stay for one reason or another, like these 2 big motels we have here. Why would they come? I don't know. And people always seem to be willing to invest here. Look at that store Lisle's got. That thing has cost him a fortune, inventory-wise. He's got stuff in there that's very expensive, you know, and lots of it. He does a good business. There are 2

big motels.

M: You are referring to the Burro Inn and the Stagecoach?

R: Yes, which are first class.

M: Yes, really. When did they build the apartment house over here?

R: Must have been about 5 years ago.

M: I notice that the units in one building are vacant or being remodeled or something.

R: Well, he got that far, and that's the last we've seen of him. He went back to Carson where he's not too well liked, I don't think, and he'd done the same thing in Tonopah. Hell, he's got Tonopah covered with these things. I would like very much to be a competent in the bankruptcy to see how he does it. He's collecting from all these places, and what he's doing with the money I don't know. I don't know whether that went into the Chapter 11 or whatever. I know he's left us in a hell of a hole. Now he's getting \$7000 a month over here, I guess, or in that neighborhood, and won't pay the taxes. So our old friend up there in the Assessor's Office just sent us a bill for many thousands of dollars for his taxes.

M: They want you to pay his taxes? Wow! Boy, that hurts.

R: Well we have a suit and we won it in our court, and just knocked him out completely. He went to Reno and got this bankruptcy thing renewed. I don't know how he is in Tonopah, but I imagine the same way.

M: How do you see the development of tourism in Beatty over the years?

R: Oh, I think that's going to be great. There's so many things here that people are curious about. We have a few natural things, the old relics and the old towns; that feature is going to increase when the bars come in.

Have you been down at Death Valley Junction?

M: Yes.

R: Well, I see that falling apart. That will be a relic some day. Just look at what that woman is doing with that dance theater down there. I don't know her. I've been approached by her several times.

M: When did tourism really take off here?

R: Oh, it's grown gradually. Wars and financial depressions and so forth slow it down. And then, when things are good and the weather conditions in the north are bad, why they'll come. Now this winter we had all the campgrounds filled up. And they are just sitting like a bunch of old hens, waiting for it to get better up north. [laughter] Why don't we take a ride around town and maybe we'll think of something.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Art Revert and Robert McCracken touring Beatty - April 10, 1987

M: It's just impressive, isn't it? We're looking to the west now and Art is pointing out the development of the town of Beatty to the west.

R: Fire stop down there. Now this is the fire house, and when I came here the fire department consisted of a bunch of buckets with round bottoms, you know.

M: Really? So literally a bucket brigade?

R: Absolutely. And they finally broke down and got themselves an old-fashioned engine; it was gasoline powered, steam operated. You know the old, very old-timer? I don't know; they should never have let go of that. I don't know where it is now, maybe in Beatty.

M: Yes, it's probably a real collector's item now.

R: Oh, indeed. But you see the extent of this housing here.

M: Yes. It just keeps moving up the hill to the west.

R: Oh, it moves in all directions. You'll see it as we go on. See, here's where the water company's tanks pump into theirs so they'll have

down-pressure. It's a paying proposition now.

M: Yes. Art's referring to the tank to the west of town. Sits on a knoll up above town. Art, was there any period where growth really took off, where you saw any spurts or stages of growth in Beatty?

R: No, I couldn't pinpoint one. It just gradually came on. We are well fixed with churches, at least I think so; maybe the churches don't. When we get back I want to show you something in that book we have out there. It would be a very interesting story for you.

M: Would you describe Beatty as a church-going town or not?

R: No, I think not. But they are building them all the time, way out here.

M: A church? We are on the Rhyolite [Death Valley] road now.

R: This is the power company's buildings over here, on top here.

M: Oh, I see, so they are kind of prepared for the future here as far as power goes.

R: Yes, they've done that very well, too, at least it would appear to be that way. See those buildings over there; those are old buildings that were moved in from Rhyolite.

M: Art's referring to buildings on the road to Rhyolite [Death Valley], just above the town, kind of the last buildings past the substation.

R: You get a pretty fair idea of what it's like by looking at it from here.

M: Yes. It's amazing. Jack Crowell was showing me pictures they think they had probably taken in the 1920s, and you compare that with the growth now, you know it's amazing.

R: I wish I had time to dig out all of our pictures and show you.

M: I wish you could, Art. I think we could use some of them in this

history book we are doing on Beatty.

R: Well, we got to go in the attic, and that's a lot of trouble for my wife.

M: Would you? Yes.

R: See this little house. That was moved from Rhyolite.

M: Which? This little, right here?

R: All these houses. If I'm not mistaken, this church was from Rhyolite.

M: You are referring to the Episcopal Church. It's stone?

R: No, it's just imitation. I'm not sure. This house on the corner was moved from Rhyolite.

M: Yes, I see, that's the corner of Second and Main, across the street from the Exxon service station. Were these houses all here when you came here, these houses from Rhyolite?

R: Yes, we moved some from Tonopah.

M: Yes, you moved the house that Jack Crowell was living in from Tonopah, didn't you. That's on Beech and Montgomery. You also said that the house behind Bobby's station was originally moved from Rhyolite and that your folks lived in it.

R: Those are stacks of fluorspar ore.

M: Can we get out and take a look at that? I've never seen fluorspar.

R: You'll find some that's extremely lavender, it's just as blue as it can be. That was the original strike, and that's what they shipped from here. They just got down to this high-grade, oh, comparatively recently, maybe 25 years ago.

Even tucked away in these remote areas there's lots of people living. This fellow built a motel clear out of town, so to speak. He's filled up all the time.

M: Is he? So it's successful. We're talking about the Lori Motel on First Street.

R: Yes. I remember when we used to say that our house was on 1 Montgomery Street, which was of course a very famous address in San Francisco.

M: There's where Cottonwood lives, isn't it. Boy, what an enterprising person.

R: Yes. What a great girl she is! She did everything she could to get by, worked everywhere, and finally decided that she'd make these ribbons or something and got into it in a big way.

At this point, McCracken and Revert begin a tour of
the Beatty Cemetery.

R: Now, we'd have to walk through that. Well, we can try.

He was a judge. [Name not mentioned on tape.] You asked me about that. You can see he was there many, many years, until his death.

M: You probably know almost all of the people that are buried here, don't you?

R: Yes. Here's old Kimball; he was an early settler here. And a Mormon.

M: Were there many Mormons in town when you got here, Art?

R: Oh, several. Who's this one?

M: This is Lawrence Kimball with Susie Kimball here.

R: McCrae; he was here for many years. He was a mining man, raised a family, his family here. Louie McCrae was one of his boys; Jack was the other; Jack is still alive. And here's old Jacks; he was an old-timer.

M: Was he here when you got here?

R: Oh, yes. Roy Taylor. I can tell you about him, but I don't think it'd be interesting. And here's Smithwick; now I didn't know him. Here's Irvis Spurlock; I didn't know him. Spurlock. Who have we here?

M: This is Phillips, E. R. Phillips, born in Goldfield.

R: No, I don't know anything about him. Here's Bradshaw, Ellis P. Bradshaw; I can't tell you right offhand about her.

M: That's Ray. Theodore Ray and Clara Ray.

R: Yes, he was a real old-timer. Well, he's got a son still here. He was one of those people that tried to infuriate the town over the least thing.

R: And here is....

M: Joan Henderson.

R: Oh, yes; she's the daughter of the man that has the Exxon on the corner. I don't recall what happened to her.

M: Keith Frederick. Lester Markham.

R: Yes, he was the husband of the girl that's working down here in this other little store. His brother-in-law is Mel Eades. Well, let's see. Let's get over here in the front where we can see to read the writing.

Ishmael. There's a family that was on this desert for many years. George D. Ishmael.

M: I've heard his name. Tell me a little bit about him.

R: He was the scourge of the desert. A hell of a likeable guy, but had a difficult time telling who belonged to this or that. And, if he got in trouble, he just laughed his way out. Hell of a guy; I liked him very much.

M: Boy, he lived to be old, didn't he. He was 96 years old.

R: Husband George D. and Mabel Luella. She was quite a girl; I liked her too. Carol Smith I didn't know. I don't know who's here.

M: This is Charles Williams over here.

R: Nope, not the Charlie Williams I knew. See these new ones. Place is

growing.

M: Just like the town, isn't it?

R: More or less, except these people were all natives at one time or another, you know, old-timers. Let's cut through here and see what we see. We ought to get enough this way. Everett Richings. He got drowned during one of our floods.

M: Riding.

R: A little more recent, I think.

M: Diaz.

R: I don't know him. Oh, it might have been Shorty Diaz, of Ash Meadows.

M: Shorty Diaz from Ash Meadows.

R: Death Valley Junction and weigh points.

M: Farley.

R: J.J.

M: Chambers, is it?

R: Oh, yes. I knew him quite well.

M: What's it like to see all of your friends and acquaintances here?

R: It's a little disturbing.

M: Yes, I'll bet it is.

R: K. J. D. Womitz.

M: Here's Archie Workins.

R: Nope. Waters, they were always very active. A great many of these people belong to some lodge.

M: What were some of the lodges?

R: Well, we had the Odd Fellows, Masons, and Eastern Star and Rebeccas, the usual run of them.

M: Were you a member of one?

R: Yes, I'm a Mason. I got my 50-year pin a few years back. Let's cut over this way.

M: Down this way?

R: I don't see anything left up here much. This group should give us some information.

M: This is McVey?

R: I knew him, but that was all. Lottie Mills; she was Ralph Lisle's wife's mother. Here's a real old-timer: John Delf. He had a ranch down below town here, and had cows, very good businessman in his own way, and he was always available for a loan if you needed a few dollars.

M: Was his ranch this side of the narrows?

R: I'll show it to you.

M: Pauline Tobin.

R: I don't know where Billy is. Billy was a character. He'd get drunk and waltz down the street, and if you encouraged him he'd take all his clothes off. Here's...who is this one?

M: This is Ritter. Victor Ritter.

R: He was an old-timer here. Very well thought of.

M: This is interesting here, isn't it. An old creosote bush growing out of a grave. Must be an old grave.

R: Yes, it is. Well, at least he's shoveled, to that extent. Who have we here?

M: This looks like Henry Higman.

R: Yes, he was very well thought of; everybody liked him. Hagerman, wasn't it?

M: Hagman, Hagman, yes, Henry Hagman.

S: And who have we, this last one?

M: This is Charles Phinney.

R: Oh, yes, he's a very old family here, very well thought of.

M: And then they've put the other grave right at the foot here.

R: Strange.

M: And you don't see that anywhere else in this cemetery. It must be his wife or something. That's right, Flora Phinney. Maybe it's his child or something. No stone.

R: It's been recently looked at. Now there's a story about each of these people, but if you want stories you can dig them out. Strozzi. He was the patron saint of the Strozzi's, Bombo's father, Spike's father.

M: Yes, Dollie Gillette's father. Came from Switzerland.

R: Yes, that's right. Hell of a good guy, too. Here's some more.

M: This is John Strozzi, here. That would be his son; I think it was his son, wasn't it. Yes, he was a young man.

R: Yes, his son. Was he killed in the war? Johnny Strozzi, yes, I believe. Let's take the back road here and look at these. We can surrender after this.

M: This is Olga Cotton.

R: She's related to the Strozzi's and the whole bit.

M: Yes, there's Maxine Strozzi, Mary Strozzi.

CHAPTER EIGHT

M: Here's Charles Stewart.

R: Nope.

M: Sam Ray?

R: I knew him too. Who do we have there?

M: William Martin.

R: Oh, Bill Martin. Can't be the Bill Martin from Lathrop Wells.

M: You wouldn't think so, would you. No, he died in '58.

R: Bill was eliminated by gunfire. Here's Johnny Konzos. He was a real old-timer here, thought a great deal of. He had a little, I told you, a little store down here. He always went around singing. Fitzgerald; I remember him.

M: John Fitzgerald.

R: Yes, he was just here. Peter Thomas Welch. I can't recall who he is, but I should know him. Fifty seven, 79; he was an old-timer.

M: It seems like a lot of these old-timers lived a long time.

R: They finally were all that was left. Who have we here?

M: John Sager.

R: Oh, yes. He was well-known here. Marchand, well that's Bobby's wife's people. Now, let's see, I think this is a Revert plot. Let's take a look over here. Frank Grace; he was a real old-timer. He more or less adopted us. He lived in back of our house. Mark Oren is Uncle Bob's boy.

M: Just a little kid, just small, only 5 years old.

R: Yes. He crawled on top of one our gas tanks--a very energetic little devil--took the big lid off and stuck his face in and was asphyxiated. Uncle Bob never got over that either. He moved away from here for that reason as much as anything, I think. Now, this is the Revert diggings.

M: The Revert stone; that's a pretty stone.

R: Yes, Florence got that for us, I think. She was Catholic and given to.... Here's my mother, Henrietta Revert.

M: Let's note her birth date; it's July 6, 1881, to November 11, 1970.

R: Edith Revert's my sister.

M: Edith Revert, March 9, 1909, to April 11, 1973.

R: And the other one is Aunt Min; she lived with us all her life.

M: That would be June 12, 1890, to February 4, 1975.

R: My mother's sister.

M: Where's your Dad?

R: He was cremated and scattered. He wanted to be buried up in the woods where we originated, you know.

M: Yes, up around Verdi?

R: Yes. Loomis; I don't remember him. I remember him, but I don't know anything about him. Let's go this way.

M: OK, you just go ahead and lead the way. Here's Laura Owen.

R: Yes, she ran a bar here, the Evil One. Very good girl. Louise Brown; she was the wife of our postmaster and storekeeper for a long time. I don't know who's under those bushes over there.

M: Let's see; it looks like--Davies, Frederick Davies.

R: His wife just came back to town. Roy Marchidan; he's killed some way or other. Now, let's go down here. There's our car; we won't have far to go. Who have we now?

M: This is George Ingram.

R: Oh, yes. I don't know what to tell you about him. I knew him.

M: William Bauman.

R: Nope.

M: U.S. Navy. Sounds like he died in the war, yes. No, well he's 33.

R: He's not being kept up here. The boys will have to get to it. Not that it makes a damn bit of difference. Anything interesting over here?

M: This Madeline Padgett.

R: What a dandy! Some of these...

M: John....

R: Freuhauser. He was liked around here. Art Davis? No. World War II, that's more or less recently.

M: Warner Medlock?

R: No, I knew him. There's Frank Milney; he was a good man; I liked him very much. I think that's enough for me for a while.

The two men resume their tour of the town.

R: Viola Cobb.

M: Somebody made that themselves, didn't they?

R: Yes. Johnny Cobb that was killed in the war, you know I was telling you. Old John Cobb was quite a man, as tough a character as ever I knew. He'd go with you any way you wanted to go.

M: Is that right. A pretty rough customer.

R: Yes, but gentle otherwise. If you behaved yourself, he did too. Here's a scene of a disaster. If anything did happen and upset this country—at least I believe it would be.

M: What do you mean?

R: Oh, it's down below town here. If something [?] came down the hill, subterranean waters might erupt. There's some old Rhyolite houses. Yes, people still living in them. I meant to tell you back there at the cemetery that there were any number of people I knew in the old days that came from Rhyolite and elected to be buried there, so they are over there.

M: But they had lived in Beatty in their later years?

R: Well, they'd lived in this area.

M: I don't recall where the Rhyolite cemetery is over there.

R: I couldn't tell you offhand either.

M: What do you think of plans to revive the town over there, not

necessarily the gay community but, you know, this guy's plans to build a new town there?

R: Oh, I think it could be, I presume, but its only claim to fame now is that it's on the map. Too far to be rebuilt.

M: Well, I guess the water supply is one problem, isn't it?

R: Yes, it is. Now the old John Delfs ranch is down this draw here.

M: Oh, I see. We are just at the lower end of the town of Beatty, going toward the narrows. Did he have a house down here?

R: Oh, yes. The house is still there, I guess.

M: Did he graze cattle here, or what?

R: Oh, all over this country, and he went with the cows and kept them moving. Where the feed was.

M: Well, he didn't necessarily stay at home?

R: No, but he made a lot of money. He'd take a couple of cows and an old truck and go out and sell them, butcher them. He'd butcher them right there at the ranch. He'd tell everyone in town when he was going to butcher, and people would show up. He'd wrap up the meat in an old newspaper, and send them along. That ended in the '30s. I remember him well.

M: Right down in the trees along the river, just south of town.

R: In fall and spring you can tell which cottonwoods are males and which females. We'd tie a ribbon around them. There's the old house, that green one.

M: Yes, it's right behind the Outpost restaurant, across from the Burro Inn. Then what would you do with these trees after you'd tie a ribbon around them?

R: Around the males, because they didn't have any cotton on them next

spring, you know. Jeez, this cotton is a hell of a thing.

M: What did you do, then, cut the females down?

R: Leave them, but cut them down if you wanted one. But otherwise you'd just take your male trees for transplanting.

That old tree there, that evergreen, was planted there by Heds Bario. He used to prospect. Those were created by water from our springs.

M: I see. That's the remains of old man Beatty's house, isn't it?

R: Yes. See these great white areas coming down here. People are of the opinion that that's alkali, which it isn't. It's soda.

M: It's soda. You mean like bicarbonate of soda?

R: Here's some. Every year, that will disappear during the rainy season, and you won't see it for a while. When the sun comes up, this will bring the water up, and it will have a little bit of soda in it. It doesn't affect our water in the least. It's to hold the moisture down. If you'd plow it up, everything would be all right.

M: Where is your spring?

R: I'll show you. It's over there.

M: So the spring is right near the old man Beatty's house?

R: Yes. My sister-in-law is getting pails here every day.

M: It's sprung up in the last few years.

R: Yes. Here's our new post office. Well, I don't know of anything else that you'd be interested in.

M: You have sure been helpful. A good tour.

R: I've enjoyed it. Johnny Cyty's hotel.

M: Cyty Hotel. That was here when you came, wasn't it?

R: Yes. One just like it across the street on the other corner.

M: Where was the Montgomery now? That was right down here, wasn't it?

R: Yes.

M: But the Montgomery was gone when you got to town, wasn't it?

R: Yes. Just the Exchange, and those other 2 old ones. People that came here would, if things were a little crowded, which wasn't too often, find places for you in private homes. Do you have any significant information on the DOE coming in here?

M: Well, no, I need to get some on the repository.

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